

CBC CENTENARY CONCERT

University of Toronto - MacMillan Theatre

October 26, 1967

* VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY IN RECITAL *

Program

- Adagio in B Minor, K. 540 - Mozart
- Sonata in B Flat Major, Opus 106 - Beethoven
(Hammerklavier)
- Allegro
- Scherzo: Assai vivace
- Adagio sostenuto
- Largo: Allegro risoluto

Intermission

- Barcarolle, Opus 60 - Chopin
- Sonata in B Minor, Opus 58 - Chopin
- Allegro maestoso
- Scherzo: Molto vivace
- Largo
- Finale: Presto non tanto

NOTE: This program is being recorded for
broadcast on the CBC Radio Network (CBL 740
Toronto) as part of the CBC Centenary Concerts,
Thursday, November 9 at 8:30 p.m. EST.

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY

Vladimir Ashkenazy was born in Gorky, U.S.S.R., on July 6, 1937. Six years later he began his formal musical studies and at the age of eight made his first public appearance in a performance of the Haydn D Minor Piano Concerto with his school's orchestra. In the same year he entered the Central Music School in Moscow, where for 10 years he studied with Anaida Sumbatian.

Ashkenazy won second prize at the fifth international Chopin Competition in Warsaw at the age of 17 during his last year at the School. Following the competition he entered the Moscow State Conservatory to study with Lev Oborin, one of the world's most renowned teachers.

In 1956, Ashkenazy gained international recognition by winning First Prize in the Queen Elizabeth Competition in Brussels in competition with 59 pianists from 20 countries. The 13-member jury included Artur Schnabel, Emil Gilels and Robert Casadesu.

After Ashkenazy's impressive achievement in Brussels the demand for his performances grew and tours of Belgium, Holland, East and West Germany and Poland followed. In 1958, at the age of 21, he made his first tour of North America and was received with acclaim, as were his subsequent tours in 1962, 1965 and 1966.

Following his first North American tour Ashkenazy attended the First Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow (the one in which Van Cliburn won world fame) where he met the youngest foreign pianist, a girl from Iceland named Dodi Trygvasson. In 1960, she returned to Moscow from her London home to study at the Conservatory and the young couple were married shortly after her arrival.

In 1962, Ashkenazy was asked by the Soviet authorities to participate in the Second Tchaikovsky Competition in which he became joint First Prize winner. At the end of that year he made his second North American tour and stopped to play in England on the way back. At that time he decided to make London his home, where he now lives with his wife and two children. He has never returned to Russia.

His regular North American concert tour began in October of this year with 30 concerts scheduled. Ashkenazy will again tour Europe and Israel, performing more than 100 concerts during his travels.

PROGRAM NOTES

ADAGIO IN B MINOR, K. 540 - Mozart

Mozart wrote this work in 1778. Even though there is no record of why he wrote it, it is assumed that because of its profound and meditative quality Mozart wrote it as a personal statement. The work is built on free form with continuously developing character.

PIANO SONATA IN B FLAT MAJOR, NO. 29, OP. 106 - Beethoven

The Hammerklavier Sonata is a crowning achievement in the spiritual development and pianistic writing of Beethoven. Beethoven went through a period of non-productivity between the years of 1810 and 1817. The creation of this piano sonata ended this phase and opened the door to his last and greatest period. A Beethoven scholar wrote that this sonata was written at a time when Beethoven realized that his loneliness was terrible and great. He continued..."but the Hammerklavier Sonata is the expression of a man of infinite suffering, of infinite courage and will, but without God and without hope." Beethoven could stand and repeat as he did when a young man, that he would challenge and conquer fate. This sonata is the largest and its power is unmatched by previous sonatas. There are four movements: Allegro; Scherzo, a long deeply moving hypnotically suspended movement; a Largo which is the introduction to the last movement which provides a bridge from the contemplative slow movement to the titanically energetic fugue marked Allegro risoluto.

BARCAROLLE, OP. 60 - Chopin

The Barcarolle was completed at Nohant in the summer of 1846. It was published in December by Brandus et Compagnie and two months later by Breitkopf and Härtel. The work is dedicated to Baroness von Stockhausen, to whose husband Chopin had dedicated the earlier G Minor Ballade. The Barcarolle was probably written to evoke the setting of a Venetian canal at night. There is evidence of this in the music for the left hand which suggests the subtle interplay of water; the feeling of gondolas moving in silence with a rocking motion is provided by the right hand. Chopin performed the Barcarolle at his last concert in 1848. He was desperately ill and it was said that on that night his playing never rose above a forte, but the Barcarolle had a profound effect upon his audience.

SONATA IN B MINOR, OP. 58 - Chopin

The Sonata in B Minor, the last of three, was written in 1844 at Nohant, where George Sand, Chopin's mistress, had a chateau. That year marked the end of the happy and productive times Chopin had while living with George Sand because of conflicts arising in their personal lives. In this sonata, Chopin remains fairly close to traditional forms although he extends and uses them to contain his expressive melodic style. The main characteristics of this sonata are the exceptionally beautiful thematic writing, the subtle harmonic colorations and perhaps the most profound element of Chopin's style, his ability to make the piano sound so rich and resonant due to the exploitation of figurations and textures of great warmth.